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MESSENGER

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Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

1993



WHAT IS AIMM?

What is AIMM? AIMM is **YOU!**

YOU, the one God is calling to go to Africa to minister among and with the people there. A long-term goal of AIMM has been to reach each language group in the Kenedougou Province of Burkina Faso. A recent missionary report reminded us that "there are three tribes in the province that have never heard the Good News in their own language; there are no churches in these tribes, no known Christians in two of the three groups (and only one Christian in the third) and there is no mission organization targeting these groups. Two of these groups are strongly animist, the third is a nomadic people that is traditionally strongly Muslim. No national Burkinabe church or other African church is targeting any of these tribes." Requests for personnel from other countries in which we minister also remain unfilled.

YOU, the one God is calling to serve in a supporting role in Africa so that other missionaries can give undivided attention to ministry with Africans and the African church. In this issue read "Time to Celebrate" and "A Home Away From Home" to appreciate the major contribution made by support personnel.

YOU, the one God is calling to minister in a personal way to missionary needs as illustrated in the article "Where There Is No Doctor."

YOU, the one God is calling to pray for those who are "Suffering but Serving," for those finding "Hope Through Prayer," for those seeking to understand peacemaking priorities, ("Botswana Christians Identify Priority Needs During Peacemaker Festival"), and for God's direction and anointing in every aspect of ministry.

YOU, the one God is calling to give financially to help bear the burdens of our African brothers and sisters who face struggles the likes of which we have never known; to make possible the sending of missionaries for evangelism, discipling, training, partnering; to meet expenses of program needs in buildings, equipment and supplies.

YOU may feel that your contribution is/would be only minimal. An African proverb reminds us, "One, one of ten." As individuals respond faithfully, a faithful group is formed. The size and impact of that group is determined by the individual responses of people like **YOU**.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all. . . All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." 1 Corinthians 12:7-8, 11

How is God directing **YOU** to minister through AIMM with the gift(s) He has determined for **YOU**?

—Leona Schrag

Time to Celebrate	3
A Home Away from Home	4
Letter from Josiah.....	5
Roth Retires After 40 Years.....	5
What Does the Bible Say About Ancestors?.....	6
CMZA Meets in General Assembly in Kikwit.....	7
Hope Through Prayer.....	8
Botswana Christians Meet for First Peacemaker Festival	9
Short-term? Go for It!	10
Twelve Steps to a Rough Draft!?	11
Suffering but Serving	12
Where There Is No Doctor.....	13
New Missionaries to Africa.....	14
Missionaries Who Returned to Africa.....	14
AIMM Directory	15
Elmer Dick—"Muambi Lungenyi"—Prophet of Wisdom	16



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Time to Celebrate

Gordon Klassen

The day of celebration had finally come. Three sheep were stewing in huge pots while 35 kilos of rice were cooking to perfection nearby. The freezer was filled with Coke. All the benches from the Orodara Church were in our yard and our friends and neighbors were beginning to fill them up.

When everyone was seated the program of dedication began with lots of singing accompanied by drums. Our goal in the celebration was to share with the people the reason behind the hostel building and at the same time to make it an evangelistic outreach. The church leaders led the service; our hostel family recited Psalm 103 and sang a song in French; a fellow missionary gave a challenge and then followed two prayers of dedication.

After a tour through the new buildings it was time for the meal. The butchering of the three sheep had taken place in our yard early that morning and Orodara church women had started fires under the three huge 20 gallon pots six hours before the celebration. The hostel MK's served heaping plates of the food and a Coke to all the guests.

Once the 120 guests were satisfied, the drums and singing began again, but this time for the dance in the middle of the yard. What a time of celebration! Neighbors, missionaries, church people and construction workers all dancing and singing praises to God! In case you're wondering, the dance is a rhythmic movement, everyone moving around together and in step in a big circle. As a refresher we served juicy ripe mangos. Why all the celebration? The HOSTEL CONSTRUCTION was finally completed and we had moved into the new facilities.

I had started just over two years earlier with a piece of land, 70 meters by 100 meters, located on the outskirts of Orodara. Very quickly I realized that my background in carpentry hadn't given me much experience in the type of work that was ahead of me. The first job was to remove all the old mud huts of the squatters and to level the land. This, of course, was all done by hand. Next I was able to employ a number of the neighbor women to carry sand in from a nearby streambed. They brought in the equivalent of thirty dump-truck loads of sand on their heads. I had some metal molds made and taught two of the church men how to make cement bricks. The cement had to be mixed by hand for the 12,000 plus cinder blocks which were needed to complete the three buildings.

Designing the electrical and plumbing systems was a real



The program at the hostel dedication.

challenge since materials are limited and septic tanks are not commercially available. They have to be designed and built on site.

During the building process I was able to purchase an antiquated cement mixer which had been broken for over 30 years. With a lot of hope and prayer I ran literally all over the country to beg, borrow or "acquire" the parts needed to make it turn again. It was a lot of work, but proved to be invaluable when it came time to mix the 900 plus

bags of cement needed for foundations, floors, pillars and beams.

The Lord led me to an excellent Burkinabe brick layer, a person very difficult to find. I was very thankful for this, because it freed up time for me to work on plumbing, electrical, windows (metal louvers), doors etc.

The final months had us working against the calendar, since furlough dates were set and the building was advancing only slowly. Somehow roofs and ceilings, walls and gates, trees and landscaping, beds and sinks were all completed before our departure. This was truly a reason to give thanks to God and to celebrate!

A special note of thanks to all who gave toward this project. Approximately 90% of the project funds have come in. Now that is truly reason for celebration!



Claire served up the plates of rice and sauce at the hostel dedication.

A Home Away from Home

Rebecca Klassen

"Bye, Mom! Bye, Dad!" accompanied by a big hug, a kiss and sometimes a few tears and another three weeks of hostel and school have begun. The parents and younger siblings began their two-and-one-half hour drive home across bumpy red roads while Mary and her roommate began to unpack and tell of their last week's experience at home in the village. I sat down beside them and listened with interest, trying to sense and meet the needs of the moment. Again I asked myself the question: Why must Mary leave her parents and live in a home away from home to go to school?

It has often been said: "Missionaries on the mission field are as happy as their children. When the MK (missionary kid) is happy, the parents can be effective workers."

A Christian boarding school, or hostel, is in many ways a superior alternative to home schooling in a completely animistic (non-Christian) environment. By the early teens the African peers of the MK in the village are sexually active, marrying and not going to school. This is certainly not a positive influence on Mary. Beside that, home schooling is poorly understood by the villagers. The village setting is also very narrow and limited. Mary needs other adult role models and like-minded peers along with her parents and siblings to develop her personality.

In coming to boarding school Mary associates with Christian hostel parents and teachers as well as peers. A hostel offers her the step between the isolated African village setting and a purely western environment. Living in an isolated village setting is stressful for the whole family. For some children it is a break to come to a Christian setting in a hostel. Most importantly, the main goal of Mary's parents in coming to Burkina Faso was to evangelize, not to educate their children.

Gord and I have been hostel parents in Orodara, Burkina Faso during our first term in Africa. Our hostel family has been gradually increasing—from two to five, now six and soon more. Our new facility can house fourteen kids. Our experience has been rich and varied as we involved ourselves in the lives of the children to help them become all that God wants them to be.

Rich and varied! One episode that stands out in my mind is the night when a burglar entered our courtyard. Total

darkness! No lights! And in the silence the sound of keys turning in various locks! Gord moved to the porch unseen and waited for the appropriate moment. Then he beamed the flashlight and shouted: "Robber! Robber!" Of course he fled. After all the commotion was over we sat with one

of the kids who had awakened, all still shaking from the scare. But the Lord had prepared us for this time. In our breakfast devotions we had been memorizing Scripture verses about fear. It was a perfect opportunity to practically apply these verses, not only for a nine-year-old, but also for a couple of 29-year-olds.

Attending church on Sunday morning can be a test of patience for all of us in the hostel, depending on each one's knowledge of Jula (the tribal language) and French. Just for a break we decided to have one service in English right at the hostel so that everyone could understand everything. Zachary (10) and Josiah (11) prepared sermonettes. Ruth (9) read Scripture. Mariam (8) led the singing and Aisha

(6) read a story. Oh yes, Gord and I did the special number. Much preparation went into this service and we watched with "parental" joy as the children took ownership of the whole service, each doing his/her part with pride and some fear. I am sure a church service had not been so intently listened to for a long time. It is a challenge for us as hostel parents to transform the routine and mundane into something meaningful and it is rewarding when we see it happen.

And then there are those everyday experiences that we so easily forget, but which bring a chuckle into

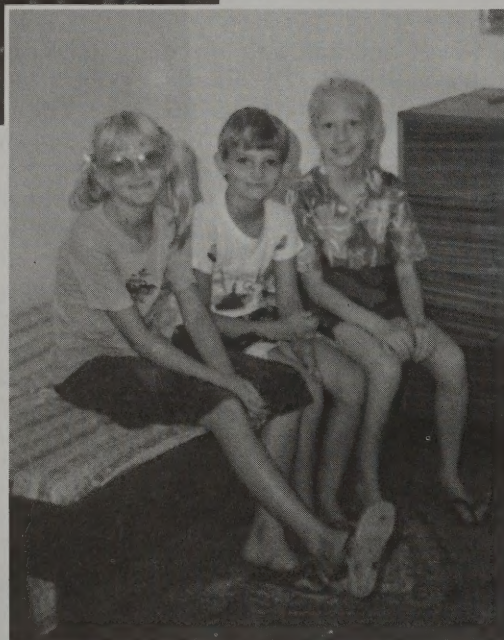
our lives each time we remember. One day I sent the boys off on their bikes to the carpenter's shop to pick up six little stools we had ordered. The only problem was, there is a carpenter on almost every corner in our village. Can you guess what happened? And then there was the day that was simply too hot to bear. The kids went down to the local tap with our 45 gallon water barrel on wheels. The richest of them pooled their resources and paid a total of fifteen cents for the water, while the poorest had to push the barrel home for the grand water fight. Changing clothes is quite superfluous. They dried on their backs in just minutes.

We feel privileged to be called to this ministry with MK's in Burkina Faso. When you pray, please remember us in our part of building God's kingdom.

(names have been changed)



(Above) Gord and Beckie Klassen with hostel family.



(Right) Mariam, Aisha and Ruth.

Letter from Josiah

May 8, 1993
B.P. 40
Orodara
Burkina Faso
West Africa

Dear Ladies,

One day after school we were at the new hostel cleaning up. Suddenly we heard a big 10 ton truck rumbling into the yard. It was loaded to the top with new furniture made of redwood and plywood and varnished to a smooth glossy finish. There were desks, closets and beds, enough to furnish the whole hostel. One by one the pieces of furniture were unloaded and carried in by the driver and his helpers. Every room now has two beds, a closet, a desk and a chest of drawers. There are also cupboards and cabinets for the kitchen.

The next day we moved; Uncle Gord, Auntie Becky, Zachary, Ruth, Marium, Aisha, Rachel and I. We loaded all our stuff onto a pick-up truck. By doing many trips we managed to get everything moved from our old house to the new hostel in one day.

Zachary and I spent the afternoon organizing our room and deciding who would sleep where. The girls also set up their rooms and Auntie Becky enjoyed her spacious new kitchen. We are all very excited to be moved into the new hostel. Zachary and I really like our fresh-smelling new room. It

is bright, cool and airy. We all want to thank you very much for sending the money for our hostel furniture to make our new home so pleasant.

Sincerely,

Josiah Thiessen



(Above) Auntie Becky enjoying her spacious new kitchen.

(Below) Zachary and Josiah in their new room.



Roth Retires after 40 Years



Earl W. Roth, executive secretary of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission the past seven years, retired on August 31, 1993. He had served with the organization a total of forty years.

In 1953 Earl and Ruth began their missionary career to Zaire, Africa (then known as the Belgian Congo). Earl worked in evangelism, in church administration, as teacher/director of various secondary schools and the Bible Institute, and as missionary counselor. Ruth was active in educational ministries, music, women's work and financial accounting, including serving as assistant treasurer for the

CMZA. Later they served in Kinshasa as business agents for the church and missionaries.

On September 1, 1986 Earl became executive secretary of AIMM. For seven years he guided the field teams in organizing local churches, setting up administrative coordinators in countries of AIMM service, establishing a missionary children's school, providing guidelines for transition to local leadership, and cooperating with many field programs. During this time the present AIMM executive offices in Elkhart, Indiana were constructed. He successfully led field personnel, board and office staff during times of crises such as the evacuation from Zaire.

AIMM sincerely thanks Earl and Ruth for the significant contribution they have made to the world mission of the church and wishes them God's blessing in the years ahead.

What Does the Bible Say About Ancestors?

Brian Reimer

(Brian and Tricia Reimer are first-term missionaries in Lesotho. The first Bible conference in which they had teaching responsibilities was held in Maseru on June 19 with the topic of "What Does the Bible Say About Ancestors?" Their first child, Alexander, was born on July 28. Ed.)

I have to admit that I was kind of hoping Tricia would go into labor on the way to the conference, but, as it turned out, if that had happened none of the scheduled speakers would have shown up. They had asked a man to come and speak on what the Basotho had believed about the ancestors in the past. I guess there was some miscommunication (or a funeral) because this speaker didn't show up. Also, Ntate Mohono was supposed to speak about ministering to youth and women but he had to go to the funeral of his only nephew. So Tricia and I were the "show."

We started about an hour late and we would have run out of time if the other speakers had shown up. I had prepared a sheet with various questions and scripture verses to help answer the questions. We divided into two groups (there were 12 Basotho present) and discussed the scripture passages. The discussion was very lively and they seemed to really enjoy it. I had wondered how this would work but thought it was the way they had done it before at the conferences. I didn't find out till later that this was the first time these discussion groups had been tried! If I had known I might have been even more worried.

These discussion groups which I had thought would take about 20 to 30 minutes took about one and a half hours and I had only a few minutes to quickly wrap up the discussion with the question of how to apply the things we had read. So I actually did very little speaking. However, Ntate Mbele said today it had been excellent and that I had God's power in my teaching, which to a Basotho would mean quite a bit more than to a North American.

After my presentation Tricia did "her thing." She had written a story (a Basotho adaptation of a story that a friend had written in Canada before we left). Our language teacher helped her to translate and adapt it. Before she read the story she asked several questions. The people really got into the story and Tricia was a real hit! They sincerely appreciated Tricia's effort to speak Sesotho and gave her a good round of applause when she finished. Recently Ntate Mbele said she was a good Basotho wife and woman now.



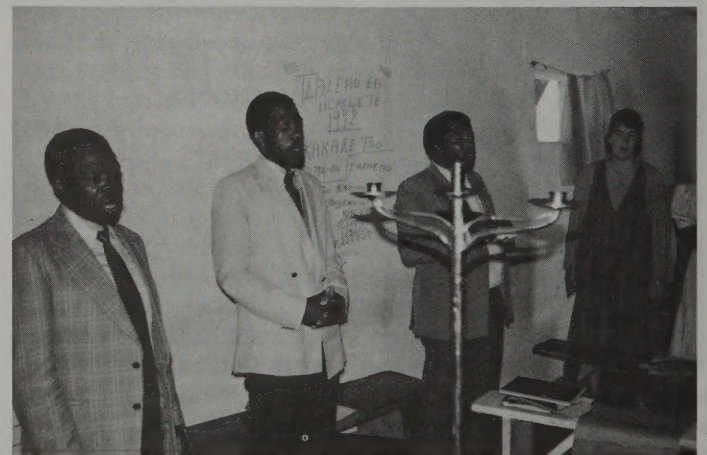
Ntate Mbele, Rev. Molise, and Brian Reimer

We both felt very good about the conference. The delegates seemed to really enjoy learning from each other and I think that these types of discussion times will help to build unity. I was quite surprised at some of the conclusions they came to. Tricia was part of one of the discussion groups and suggested that their conclusions were largely due to their lack of hermeneutical skills. They took everything literally and did not know anything about checking the context. I had hoped to do a hermeneutics-type course sometime but now I may try to do it sooner.

Anyway they all agreed very strongly that the ancestors did not and could not affect them anymore. I tried to challenge this a little to get them to think but it didn't really work.

I think the biggest struggle we had was that of not being able to understand what the people were saying. I tried to get interpretations but when they got wound up and excited it was hard to stop them to ask what was being said. It is rather hard to guide a discussion when you don't know what is being said. Oh well, it's a challenge to keep at the Sesotho.

It was truly exciting, AGAIN, to see how God takes a hold of our insecurities and makes things work. I really didn't know what to expect before the conference. I didn't know their questions nor from what kind of background they would all be coming and thus didn't have any idea where the discussion would go. God just took over and gave me peace and made it into a successful conference.



AFCC Annual General Meeting, February 1993

CMZA Meets in General Assembly in Kikwit

Gordon Claassen

It took seven days, traveling 540 miles west by various "manioc" trucks and 60 miles by foot (the truck broke down), before I arrived with the Mbuji Mayi delegates in Kikwit, a city 330 miles east of Kinshasa, for the General Assembly of the CMZA held Sept. 22-28, '93. Bonds with my fellow travelers were formed in new ways as together we "suffered" thru the trip. 125 other delegates arrived from east and west joyfully greeting each other with bear hugs and slaps on the back before joining in sessions of praise & worship, work and deliberation.

During the week, resolutions on matters pertaining to economic and social development, women's work and issues, evangelism and church ministries, education, as well as medical programs were studied in commissions before being presented to the greater assembly for discussion and final approval.

Unique to this assembly was the approval of the revision of the statutes and by-laws of the church. During the past few years, many hours of work and thought had gone into the rewriting of this project by the special commission. Decentralization—more independence for local districts and individual churches is one of the changes. A distribution of responsibilities among the administrative officers should now lead to more clarity of responsibility and efficiency in accomplishing goals. Guidelines for the choosing and sending of candidates to theological studies, as well as for the ordination of pastors, were spelled out more clearly.

Signs of increasing maturity in the church were evident:—Due to experiences in the past years of legal procedures in the courts, awareness was high of the need to be "legally correct" in all areas of technicality. I.e: who, exactly, is a voting member. Some who had only a letter of recommendation as a replacement of another were not accepted if their name had not appeared in the minutes of their regional conference.

—Care was taken that the wording of resolutions be correct.

—As North American funds diminish each year, the

church is forced to understand that it must stand on its own two feet, recognize some mismanagement, and begin to take ownership of its programs and progress. I felt this time that the assembly finally looked these unpleasant facts straight in the eyes and acted on accepting them. (Rides on commercial trucks and the resulting "7" days on the road, rather than the several-hour MAF flights, is one painful result).

—The issue of women's ordination is being studied for further deliberation in the next assembly of April 1995.

—Dividing the West Kasai region into three parts and the Bandundu region into two have been passed.

—Elections for all regional and national positions will be held in the next year and a half. This could lead to undesired campaigning and some tension beforehand, of course, but we pray that the vision of oneness in the church will not be lost in the thick of it all.

The devotional sessions, "Increase Our Faith," were inspirational as we were challenged to live honest and open lives before God and before our church family to step out in faith as we feel God moving in our lives. Listening to and participating in the beautiful and strong four-part harmony as we sang in worship or mealtime grace was a highlight to me. They won't have anyone tell them that hymns belong only to Westerners!

Difficulties forged unity: Four free-will offerings were taken: for two pastors who were hospitalized, one whose bag was stolen (he ended up with much more than he brought), and since the session went longer than expected ... for the extra food we'd need.

The kitchen staff did a marvelous job of preparing huge amounts of fufu/bidia etc. for all of us: on time and delicious. I often saw the women singing together ... a few up on their feet swaying rhythmically as they worked. "Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say..."

"Increase Our Faith" ... yes, I feel God was speaking to us to have more faith in our church family ... to be less critical ... more understanding and helpful to find solu-

tions. To believe God will supply the church's needs thru his methods, and not just thru putting hands out to overseas agencies. It was a timely theme for a church struggling to find its place in an economic, social, and political crisis the likes of which it has not known before.



CMZ church leaders in business session.

Hope Through Prayer

Gary and Jean Isaac



Group at Silowa, AIC Conference Center, Umtata, 1989.

"The dream of a 'new South Africa' at times seems to be a realistic vision to be inaugurated in a few months. At other times it seems to be the impossible dream." So concluded Gary Isaac, after a deadly attack in Umtata.

He continued, "We in Umtata were shocked to hear of the brutal, senseless killing of five children by the South African Defense Force (SADF) in October. In disbelief my first question was 'How do they know it was the SADF?' only to hear later on the news that the SADF was congratulating itself on a 'successful attack on an APLA base in Umtata.'"

The Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) is the armed wing of the *Pan Africanist Congress* which has admitted involvement in various attacks on white farmers and police. It was APLA members who carried out the attack at St. James' Church in Cape Town and the murder of Amy Biehl, the American doing research at the University of Cape Town.

At first the age of those killed was in dispute. However, it has now been confirmed that two were twelve years old, two sixteen and one seventeen, all riddled with bullets from automatic gunfire as they slept in their house at 1:00 am. All were currently attending school. The SADF claims they have reliable information that the older three were APLA "terrorists" and that the raid was necessary to protect innocent South Africans (read whites).

Even if it be conceded that Military Intelligence had the right information it is sheer madness to think that such brutality could lead to any positive outcome. PAC is a partner in the negotiation process to lead to elections next April. This action will render PAC even less willing to compromise and cooperate. On the other hand it will surely result in revenge attacks on whites.

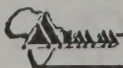
Transkei has a population of about ten thousand white

South Africans, most of whom live in Umtata. Many are terrified of possible reprisal attacks. One of our acquaintances has initiated a petition to be signed by white South African residents here expressing their horror, shame and indignation at this madness. They are hoping to get at least one thousand signatures.

At a time when the National Party is seeking to win the hearts and minds of black South Africans hoping for support in the upcoming elections, one cannot imagine what kind of thinking is behind this dastardly act. Any credibility they may have gained recently has surely been blasted to bits by the guns of October 8.

Earlier Jean Isaac had reported on their second round of conferences which occurred in May and June. "At each of these we registered 30-40 people. Our theme then, as at the last, was **Prayer**. Especially at Butterworth as Gary talked about the prayers of Daniel and Nehemiah, people sat at rapt attention, taking in every word. Later when opportunity for responses was given, one man said, 'Prayer changes things.' Gary asked whether prayer could change governments. 'YES!' Can prayer help when teachers are on strike? 'YES!' Can prayer change our young people who have no jobs, are poorly educated, and are causing great disturbances in our cities? 'YES!' Then he added that we must not lose hope. People who lose hope try to drown their troubles with drink. People who lose hope hang themselves from rafters. Through prayer we have hope. It was a moving moment."

Our faith has also been strengthened. We realize that we must be more faithful in praying for the people of South Africa—for those who are working to provide a new government, for those who are skeptical and uncertain, and for those who are getting impatient. Bring us your peace, O God.



Botswana Christians Meet for First Peacemaker Festival

Jonathan Larson



Festival participants visiting.

Kanamo Centre drama group.



In a first-of-its-kind festival bringing together Botswana Christians from across the church spectrum, participants set out peace-making priorities for this desert African country. While the peace-making needs of countries like South Africa have often grabbed the headlines, Botswana Christians indicated an urgent need for fostering peace in families, communities and in churches that are often plagued by unresolved strife. (There are nearly 200 different registered denominations in a country of 1.3 million people.)

The festival, organized with the help of Mennonite Ministries workers, unfolded under a large banner bearing the biblical greeting "Peace Be With You." The light blue banner, sewn with the help of refugees from several neighboring countries, had been circulating among local churches for several weeks before the festival as an invitation to participate. Between 150 and 200 Christians did so.

The three-day event which took place at a community hall in Old Naledi, a squatter settlement, included the showing of the film, "Jesus," a choir festival highlighted by the participation of Dutch Reformed Church singers from Bushman communities in western Botswana, community drama groups, a Saturday morning procession led by a uniformed brass band from an African Independent Church, workshops dealing with peace-making needs in such areas as gender violence, alcohol abuse, AIDS victims, refugees and human rights, as well as small group discussion.

One of the speakers, a traditional chief, who is also a minister in one of the African Independent Churches, made a plea for leaders to see the laying of a foundation for strong marriages as a critical peace-making activity. The chief reflected on the breakdown of families as a cause of much of the conflict brought to his court. The theme of gender and family violence was also taken up powerfully by the community drama groups and by workshop leaders. This message was particularly apt when seen against the backdrop of the poverty and social stress of the surrounding squatter settlement. Youngsters from the community came to participate in special children's activities centered on the story of Jesus stilling the storm. They later formed

a choir and processed into the main hall with a boisterous song, "I will never lose my faith!"

Among participants from such nearby countries as Swaziland and Lesotho, was Graham Cyster of the Broken Wall Community in Cape Town, South Africa, who shared stories of the search for peace in Kayelitsha and other troubled townships. Cyster also preached at the closing worship service that included foot-washing and the Lord's Supper.

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission worker, Jonathan Larson, explained that the festival approach was an attempt to make the peace-making theme accessible to everyday Christians. Previous regional gatherings on peace-making have been seminars and workshops for the top level of church leadership. Larson indicated the festival was to be Botswana specific: to focus on local needs and resources. The festival approach also recognizes the need to go beyond a crisis understanding of peace-making and places it in the context of everyday living.

"As with any new idea, there is a need to overcome the reticence of Christians who have often been manipulated and exploited," said Larson. "There is a long-term task here to encourage the full breadth of the Christian community to consider the Gospel call to peace-making. The real significance of this gathering will be seen in time as we build with patience on this delightful beginning."

"One of the little clues to what happened here was to see that the peace banner got soiled when it was dragged in the dirt during the opening procession through the squatter settlement," chuckled Larson. "I believe that our peace-making mandate as Christians in Botswana has hit the road. We're talking true grit here."

Among the peace-making activities that Mennonites in Botswana are considering is a Victim-Offender Reconciliation process that the government prison system wants to discuss. There will also be peace-making festivals held in scattered locations to stimulate local congregations to engage in peace-making work and witness. Funding for the gathering was provided by MCC whose regional representatives, Leona and Peter Penner, encouraged the festival project.



Jean Maribe (in white dress) as chief cook with her helper- working in "kitchen."



Choirs dancing and singing Kura Basarwa choir in the foreground.

Short-term? Go for It!

Peter W. Buller

Near midnight as the Swiss Air jet swept over Kinshasa to circle towards Ndjili Airport we peered out of the window looking for something familiar. The lights along the south bank of the Zaire River outlined a point of land jutting out at a river bend. Gladys and I had lived there on the British Baptist mission compound back in 1964 after evacuation from Mukedi during the Mulele Rebellion. As the plane continued its sweep we saw the lights of Lumumba Boulevard leading to the airport where we would land shortly, after an absence of five years. Our pulse quickened. Would we succumb to culture shock? But once we arrived at immigration and customs our fears were quickly relieved. It was all maddeningly familiar. We handed our passports through a masked slot and were jostled in the milling crowd of expectant arrivals, each one wondering if this might be the END. Then we were swamped with fifteen baggage carriers, each demanding that he carry our baggage to customs. Finally came the customs agent's thinly veiled request for ten million zaires for having "passed us." That used to be \$20,000,000 but inflation has reduced it to ten dollars. Yes, we were back in Zaire. All was normal. Our prayer was that our six-month return to the land where we had spent many years from 1952 to 1987 would be blessed by God.

Dr. Lumeya Adisola, the newly appointed president of the Pastors Institute (ISTK) was among the first of many visitors to bid us welcome. I had learned to know him as a student in the mid '70s and remembered him as excelling in his quick grasp of New Testament Greek. After graduation he had completed doctoral studies in Europe and himself taught N.T. courses at the Protestant Theological Seminary. Brother Lumeya expressed satisfaction that my position as visiting professor in N.T. would allow him needed time-away from teaching duties to attend to the overwhelming administrative needs that faced the Institute at this time of national upheaval. Under Pastor Lumeya's leadership the academic year began with a four-day spiritual retreat in which students and faculty were challenged to follow Christ in wholehearted discipleship.

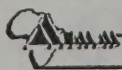
Pastor Begela made an appointment to discuss a concern with me. He arrived at 2:00 p.m. sharp dressed in a neat suit and tie, with a folder tucked under his arm. I had not known him from the past, but he and his wife both hold Masters Degrees from the Bangui Theological Seminary. When we had prayed together he shared his concern. The folder contained a write-up of Mr. Begela's vision of leading the Zaire Mennonite Church in a pioneer foreign missions outreach in sub-Saharan Africa beginning with an intensive program of missions challenge throughout local Mennonite churches. "Pastor," I said to myself, "How dare you have such a lofty vision for the future when your country is devastated by political and social unrest while inflation rages at 400%?" And the Lord answered me: "You need to learn what your brother Begela has discovered—'We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen...the things that are unseen are eternal.'"

I first met Pastor Kandaiz in the early '70s when he was planting the first Zaire Mennonite Church congregation in Kinshasa by renting a Salvation Army Chapel for an 8:30 to

10:00 a.m. service. Then in the late '70s, to deepen his qualifications for pastoral leadership he attended ISTK as a special student. But the years had brought changes and now in March of '93 he was the lead Kinshasa pastor of the "Mbonza group" that had spent five bitter years trying to regain control of leadership of the Zaire Mennonite Church. We had offered to make contact with Pastor Kandaiz but received no response. Scheduled to leave Zaire on March 17, we decided, with mixed feelings since we had no assurance of being welcome, to visit Pastor Kandaiz' parish on March 7. To our joy we were warmly received and were invited to say to the congregation what might be "on our hearts." I appealed for confession of wrong and the need for forgiveness and pardon by both sides in this sad church conflict. After the service we sat together for an hour with the pastor and church elders sharing from the past and speaking of the need for reconciliation. Pastor Kandaiz' word to me was: "You, too, as a missionary need to see whether your attitudes were wrong and how they may have fueled or even caused the break in the unity of the church that has haunted us for six years." My first inner reaction was: "Me? Of course I'm without blame—it was them!" But since then I have written a letter to Pastor Mbonza asking his pardon and forgiveness for any wrong I may have done him.

I had promised Pastor Mayala of the Baptist Church in the suburb of Delvaux that I'd preach in his church on January 31. He had graduated from the Pastors Institute in 1976. But on January 28 to 30 the whole city was racked by gunfire, looting and death as the army went on a rampage to protest having received their salary in near worthless inflationary five-million zaire bills. The night of Saturday the 30th produced only isolated gunfire and since all seemed quiet on Sunday morning I decided to keep my preaching promise. Delbert Dick's motorcycle carried me through a ghost town of looted shops. I drove four miles to Pastor Mayala's church. Not a vehicle on the road. An eerie feeling. Will anyone be in church, I wondered? I was to preach thrice—in Lingala, French and English services. But I need not have wondered. The Christians of Delvaux who had lived through three days of death and destruction gathered to praise God for His care and protection. Some had lost all they owned as marauding soldiers plundered their home. They gave thanks to God for preserving their lives. Eight choirs sang praises to Christ. And all joined in prayer imploring that God's peace might yet overcome the threatening evil. Five hours later as the motorcycle carried me home I rejoiced that here in the heart of darkness God had His people, focused on the living Christ and led by faithful pastor Mayala.

We thank God for the privilege of having had this six month post-retirement term in Zaire. It was a time of renewing old friendships, making new friends, of soul searching upon seeing a joyous faith lived in desperate conditions, and of sharing the Word of God. If the Lord opens the way for other former missionaries ready for a blessing to become short-term missionary volunteers, Gladys' and my word to them is "go for it!"



Twelve Steps to a Rough Draft!?

Dan Petersen

AIMM missionaries Dan and Kathy Petersen have been living among the Nanerige Senufo people since 1984. Last year they submitted to the national government of Burkina Faso a provisional alphabet for the language. But even when the alphabet gets approved by the authorities, the Senufo people in their remote villages will still be unable to use it—only one Nanerige Senufo person is literate in his own language: Maliki Ouattara, the Petersen's language assistant.

In the last year Dan and Maliki have begun translating key portions of scripture from the Old and New Testaments. These passages are needed for basic evangelism and teaching among the 50,000 Nanerige Senufo people. Since new Christians will not immediately be able to read the alphabet, each passage from the Bible is being translated onto cassette tape as well as in written form. But translating the Bible onto cassette is not a simple process—at present Dan and Maliki need at least *twelve* different steps just to get a “rough draft” on tape. Here is a brief description of those twelve steps:

- 1) First they study the passage (usually about 10 to 15 verses long), reading all they can find in French and English about the meaning, history and interpretation of the passage.
- 2) They come together for a thorough discussion of each word and phrase, until they feel confident that Maliki has understood it. If something seems unclear, they go back to the original text and commentaries until they get an answer.
- 3) Now Maliki sits at his own desk with the cassette recorder and microphone, and—using a French Bible and his notes from the first two steps—he translates the passage orally onto tape.
- 4) Next Maliki transcribes the tape onto paper, checking each word for correct spelling, and noting any new words that they have not yet included in their ever-expanding dictionary.
- 5) Now Maliki actually does a literal re-translation of the Senufo *back* into French (this is called a “back translation”), which will be used later by translation checkers who will not be able to understand the Senufo language. Any inconsistencies between the French of this back translation and a good French Bible may indicate problems in the Senufo translation.
- 6) Next Maliki and Dan sit together with the written version of the passage and go over it syllable by syllable to be sure the tone of each word is correctly marked using tone accents. Maliki actually whistles much of the text so Dan can be sure he is hearing the melody of each word. At this point they will also make note of any new expressions or grammatical constructions.



7) Now comes the fun part: Dan goes over the whole passage “with a fine-toothed comb” and requires Maliki to explain or defend each choice of words, each expression used in the Senufo version on tape. Dan is especially looking for anything that may have strayed from the original meaning, while Maliki is trying to be faithful to the original while still employing fluent Senufo words and expressions.

8) By this time the written version has acquired a lot of red ink changes, and may be quite different than the originally taped version. Dan now takes the written

version to the computer and types up the whole revised text.

9) Typing is never without errors, especially when each vowel carries a small tone accent, so Maliki has to proof-read the printout and correct any errors.

10) These corrections go back to the computer for a quick reprinting of a (hopefully) error-free written version.

11) Maliki now gets his cassette recorder and microphone out again, and—after reading over the passage several times to familiarize himself with it—he records it on cassette tape.

12) Because oral reading of a passage is hardly ever word-for-word perfect (can you read a whole page of the Bible out loud without a single slip of the tongue?), Dan “proofreads” the tape by listening to it and following along on the page. Each error or slip of the tongue is discussed with Maliki; it may be more than a simple slip—perhaps unduly awkward wording needs to be changed to be more readable.

13) If this checking of the tape has resulted in any corrections, then they have to be re-typed or re-taped. If there were no corrections or tongue-slips, then step 12 is the last step.

So after at least *twelve* steps, they now have a “rough draft” both on cassette tape and on paper, ready to take out and use in the village. This version will likely go through even more changes as listeners ask questions and provide suggestions for improvements. Translation consultants will also need to go over the text for accuracy and meaning, so the process is far from complete even at twelve steps. But these cassette tapes of key scripture passages will be the first Bible that many Nanerige Senufo people will hear.

In the years ahead, many Senufo people may be able to read the Bible for themselves, but at this early stage, recording the translation on cassette tape provides an immediate way to get God's word to the Nanerige Senufo people.



Suffering but Serving

Richard Steiner

What would we find when we went to visit our graduates from the International School of Evangelism in April and May of 1993? Steve Nelson and I wondered about that as we were driven on the old Isuzu pickup, while still dark, that early Wednesday morning, April 28.

We were to stop first in Tshikapa, headquarters for the Mennonite Church in Zaire. Then to Kananga and finally to Mbuji Mayi. Over forty graduates were in the Kasai, whom we hoped to reach at these three centers. Yet we did not offer them transport expenses. Some would have to come a long way while others were located at these centers. How many would come? The country was in political and economic turmoil. Even in good times, evangelists received little to nothing for their work. Now in this economic crisis public school teachers, government civil servants, and soldiers were not being paid by the government.

We wanted to interview each of them, to see if their training had made a difference, to learn what changes they would suggest in their training, and then to know how we could help them in their ministries. We had written to Rev. Kabasele, our grad and CMZ's vice-president and head of the Evangelism Department to arrange for our stay.

He and a few others from CMZ were at the airport to meet us. Both Steve and I had nostalgic feelings. I had come here first in August 1959 to begin my missionary career at Kalonda, particularly at the Bible Institute. For Steve, his first term was here in doing building for the Bible Institute and the Kalonda station in the 1980s. There were no missionaries living at Kalonda. Everything had been turned over to the Zairians. The road we traveled from the airport to Kalonda could only be traveled successfully by a motorcycle or a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Rev. Kabasele successfully got us through water, and all sorts of difficult road situations. We were housed in the guest house, which Steve had built earlier. Our hospitality was well taken care of by the station chairman.

We spent time with each of our four evangelists. All had been trained for CMZ, one had left CMZ to join a Baptist group in his area. He had given many years to evangelism for CMZ. Rev. Kabasele was more involved in administration than evangelism, but that work needed to be done. And he was doing a good job. Rev. Ndaie and Rev. Ngala Mukenge, evangelists, were using their training. Lack of funds to do their work seemed the most voiced problem but lack of transport also was mentioned. We were able to meet with other CMZ leaders, the Bible Institute professors and students, and the district pastors who were meeting at that time. The contacts were good and we were encouraged to see the church at work. Due to the demands on our time, we enjoyed three breakfasts on Thursday morning. We tried to get excused from the third breakfast, but the station chairman refused to release us. He was told to feed us, so



EIE Grads at Kananga, April 1993 with Dick and Steve

we would have to eat.

Rain prevented our trip to Kananga on Thursday afternoon, so we waited for the missionary pilot the next day. We met at the Protestant Center where we interviewed 6 graduates, none were from CMZ. To each graduate we gave one or two books which Dr. and Mrs. Braun had written and we distributed the initial literature for the A.D. 2000 movement. This movement was launched in January

at a national conference headed by Dr. Diafwila, the national evangelist. Our Center of Evangelism and the ECZ (The Church of Christ in Zaire) are cooperating in this national evangelistic effort to evangelize all of Zaire, reaching unreached areas and trying to double the number of Christians by the year 2000.

On Saturday, we were flown into Mbuji Mayi, where we had a great welcome. Many of the fifteen graduates, including several from CMZ and CEM, met us at the airport. We went to the CMZ offices to begin our interviewing. We continued interviews Sunday afternoon after worshiping at a Mennonite Church. The graduates had organized the first alumni group of the International Center of Evangelism. Saturday night they themselves provided for us a feast of great Zairian food, arranged by the president of a Pentecostal church in his home. We were overwhelmed with the hospitality and their initiative to do this for us. We reported on what was going on at the Center and they had questions. We spent time praying one for another. On Monday morning we met with seven denominational heads about their concerns and how the Center could help them. All were wanting to send more leaders to our three schools, but the big problem was lack of scholarship funds. The Center has limited scholarships available but counts on supporting missions as well as local churches to subsidize the cost.

The trip was an encouragement to Steve and me. All of the graduates affirmed the great difference in vision, purpose and practical know-how their training made in their present ministries. The portable school method which sends evangelists into villages without an evangelical church was being used by many. After two months, a catechist from each of the 40 villages is trained for two months in the portable school. He then returns to lead the new church.

Many were suffering with little money to take care of their families and to do their work. The graduates were encouraged to know that we wanted to keep in contact with them, to learn from them and continue to help them. By training leaders with vision, purpose and practical skills the Center is impacting the evangelism, Christian education, and literature programs of CMZ and CEM, (the two Mennonite churches to which AIMM has given birth), as well as many other denominations in Zaire and 17 other African countries.

Where There Is No Doctor

Paul Thiessen

The Peugeot pickup truck rattled and shook as it bounced over the unpaved road. Lois and I sat in the cab with Jonathan and Caleb. The last load of our household possessions tightly packed in the back helped make the ride a little more tolerable.

Behind us lay the city of Bobo-Dioulasso. Eighty kilometers ahead of us was Orodara where Josiah and Ruth were in boarding school. Ten kilometers beyond that was the village of Tin—our destination.

Our stay in Bobo had been enjoyable, Lois and I had completed the 12 beginner lessons of the Jula language and were now looking ahead to continuing work among the Siamou people. We were looking forward to living in Tin where melodic birds are the first sounds you hear early in the morning, unlike the roar of motorcycles and trucks that greeted us at 6 AM in Bobo and also created a lot of dust. The thick dust in the air bothered us all, but Jonathan suffered most and his asthma symptoms became more acute as the months went by. We hoped optimistically that the fresh, clean air in Tin would help Jonathan breathe more easily.

A few crisis experiences in Bobo made us very thankful for the medical help available in the city—a highly qualified African doctor, experienced missionary nurses, five pharmacies to choose from, and living within a phone call or ten-minute drive from these medical resources.

But Tin was our home. It had been for four years already. We had many friends there, an unfinished job was waiting for us. We arrived in Tin at noon that day. Finally we were back in our beloved village. Our minds were filled with many thoughts: ... “These people need the Scriptures in their mother tongue.” ... “God has called us here to bring them the message of truth and to establish the church of Jesus Christ among them.” ... “Soon we will be able to actually begin translating.” ...

However, even as we drove to Tin that day, Jonathan had been wheezing slightly. That first night in Tin he wheezed and coughed, and we sat beside his bed watching his breathing become more difficult and labored. The next day, as his difficulty with breathing increased some more, we wondered what to do. Our friends coming to greet us looked at Jonathan with sympathy and concern. By late afternoon it was obvious that we would have to get help. That reality hit us like a blow. One night in Tin and we had to hurry off for help. Discouraged and frustrated we threw a few items back on the truck and returned to Orodara. There Beckie Klassen gave him two shots and in the morning he was slightly better. But we drove back to Bobo to see Dr. Tall, the kind African doctor who had helped Jonathan a number of times already.

With new apprehension we returned to Tin. How could we live here and continue our work if Jonathan needed help which was not available in Tin? Making frequent emergency trips to Bobo was not practical. Resources available in Orodara were very limited, and even that was a 35 minute drive from home on dry roads. In rainy season the enormous puddle in Lidara would be an obstacle to be reckoned with. We prayed and asked God to help us

find solutions to these problems.

February to early April Jonathan had only minor difficulty. Meanwhile we discovered that the Klassen's niece in Winnipeg had asthma worse than Jonathan, and that her parents were very experienced in taking care of an asthmatic child using two devices that are very helpful in monitoring and treating asthma. Her mother, Sylvia Klassen, purchased those items for us in Winnipeg and mailed them to Orodara.

At the end of April I had to go to Ouagadougou for a week, leaving Lois at home in Tin with the children. I hoped and prayed that Jonathan would be okay during my absence. When I returned to Tin, I brought with me the AeroChamber and Peak Flow Meter which had arrived in Orodara. That very evening Jonathan started an asthma attack. We used both of these devices then and found them to be effective. God's timing was excellent! The very day we needed help, it was there.

June 24 was a special day for me. That morning I read God's promise to Jacob during his dream in Bethel (Genesis 28): “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go ... I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

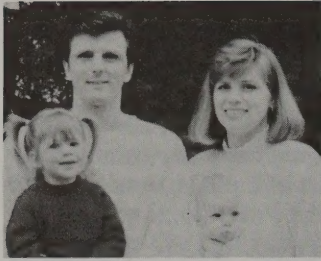
A few hours later a package came in the mail for us from Sylvia Klassen. It contained a very informative booklet as well as medications especially chosen for Jonathan, with instructions on how to use them. She also wrote a detailed letter giving information on eight different asthma medications, in response to some questions Lois had asked her. At the end of the letter she offered to help us more and would do her best to answer our questions.

As I read that letter I was overwhelmed with awe at God's love and care for us. And He reminded me of the verses I had read in the morning. I remembered the anguish with which we had left Tin in January to get help for Jonathan. We had wondered whether we would be able to stay in Tin to do our work. God was saying to me, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go ... I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you!”

Today the prospects of continuing our work in Tin look good. We are thankful to God for Dr. Tall, and Beckie Klassen who helped us in Bobo and Orodara. And in a special way we are grateful to God for Sylvia Klassen, a person we have never seen, who was willing to become involved.

Through these people we have experienced God's love. The Great Physician is present where there is no doctor.

New Missionaries to Africa



David and Elvera Stoesz, Kezia, Hannah

On July 8 David, Elvera, Kezia (2 1/2 years) and Hannah (6 months) joined the AIMM team in Orodara, Burkina Faso.

David and Elvera are combining their skills as teachers of AIMM missionary children at "Orodara Kalanso" school. Teaching six children in six different grades is their challenge. But having previous teaching experience will keep them from becoming "ruffled."

Their special interests in music, sports, crafts and hunting will come in handy as they spend most of their time with the school children and their own small daughters.

They are co-sponsored by the EMMC and GC/COM conferences.

Ron and Gloria Camp

When Ron and Gloria Camp arrived in Burkina Faso on June 26 they felt as if they had landed "on another planet."

These two active members of Calvary Mennonite Church, Aurora, OR decided that a good way to spend a year of "retirement" would be to serve as house parents to the children of AIMM missionaries who are studying at "Orodara Kalanso."

Ron's 38 years of experience as administrator and teacher will come in handy as he manages the facility and gives counsel and Christian nurture to the children.

Gloria's special touch will be seen as she prepares meals, cares for the children's clothing and manages the extra help that will be needed as she makes the children's "home away from home."

They represent the General Conference Mennonite Church as self-supporting, short-term volunteers.



Missionaries Who Returned to Africa

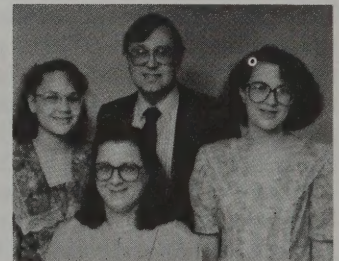


Tim and Laura Bertsche, David, Maria, Eric

For six months the Bertsches' "home address" was Morton, Illinois.

They logged many miles as they visited their supporting churches. In January of this year Tim, Laura and the children returned to Francistown, Botswana to resume their work among the AICs. Tim teaches Bible classes, is editing a series of short Bible commentaries in Setswana and spends much time relating to AIC leadership. Laura, in addition to caring for the family, hosts guests, teaches sewing classes and often leads a weekly women's Bible study.

The Evangelical Mennonite Church, U.S. is their sponsor.



Delbert and Susan Dick, Rachel

Delbert, Susan and Rachel Dick returned to Zaire in August. The first three months were spent in Kinshasa where Del entered the financial records on computer. Rachel joined other students who are studying at Karawa Academy. (Debbie is a freshman at Bethel College, Minnesota.) In November Del and Susan returned to their work with STUDIPROKA in Kananga.

They are sponsored by the General Conference.



Gerald and Bev Neufeld, Juanita, Jonathan, Kevin

Four months flew by quickly for the Neufelds who left Burkina Faso on June 8. Bev and the children flew directly to Manitou, Manitoba to take up residence there near family and friends. Gerald stopped for a two-month course at The Summer Institute of Linguistics at The University of North Dakota. His studies helped him prepare a Siamou grammar sketch.

During August and September they visited 8 churches and shared from their ministry in Bobo-Dioulasso. On October 11 they returned to Burkina Faso for another term of service.

The General Conference is their sponsor.

Gary and Jean Isaac, Mitchell, Stuart

North America Assignment (NAA) for Gary, Jean, Mitchell and Stuart fits best into the family schedule when planned during the boys' Christmas holiday of 45 days. The Isaacs lived in Whitewater, KS for two months, arriving early December and returning to The Transkei in early February.

Gary continues his teaching of African Independent Church leaders. Jean's primary responsibility is working with the women who are writing Bible study guides for AIC women. Together the Isaacs plan Bible conferences throughout the country.

Their sponsor is the General Conference Mennonite Church.



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Elmer Dick—"Muambi Lungenyi"—Prophet of Wisdom

I have known Elmer Dick since the first time I went to Africa in 1951. Elmer and Esther had been in Zaire (then known as the Belgian Congo) since 1946 and were nearing the end of their first term. I knew Elmer as an evangelist and a Bible teacher. A man with a real compassion for bringing the Gospel to those who had never heard. He was a committed soul winner and a discipler. An excellent counselor whom the Africans named well—"Muambi Lungenyi"—Prophet of Wisdom.

I will never forget Elmer's prayer at the roadside in Angola during the 1960 evacuation. He prayed for the "young inexperienced church" that was left behind. I don't believe Elmer ever stopped praying for that church in Zaire. He was one of the first men who went back right after independence when there needed to be a presence.

Elmer was flexible when asked to take up different assignments. He learned, spoke and used the Tshiluba language very well and was able to speak to any villager throughout the whole area. He had a dry sense of humor. Was never in a hurry. Had infinite patience and was not easily ruffled. He had *time* for people, something the Africans loved.

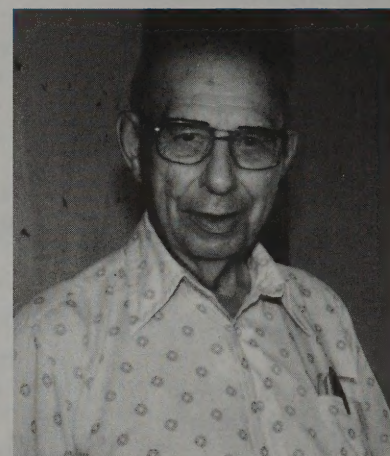
In 1980 Elmer and Esther retired, but in 1989 they were asked by the Zairian church to come back and "sit" (be

present) with them. The assignment (visiting the churches and teaching Bible) was to be for a few months. They were in Zaire for more than a year because "the people were so hungry for God's Word and for fellowship."

Elmer was a model missionary. Not perfect, but forgiven, enabled and empowered by the Spirit of God to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

AIMM has lost a faithful prayer warrior and generous giver. "Well done, though good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." (Matt. 25:21)

(Excerpts from eulogy given by Art Janz at the funeral, August 25, 1993 at Gospel Mennonite Church, in Mountain Lake, MN.)



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